



Sustainable Transportation Plan Advisory Committee

Date: Wednesday, April 7, 2021

Time: 1:00 PM – 2:30 PM

Location: Conducted via Remote Participation

In attendance: Mike Rademacher, Heather Barber, Darcy Devney, Daniel Amstutz, Julie Wayman, Doug Mayo-Wells, Len Diggins, Rachael Stark, Kristine Shah, Jenny Raitt, Brian Ristuccia, Petru Sofio.

Minutes

1. Welcome and Introduction to Remote Meeting, including Ground Rules.

Daniel Amstutz read a set of prepared remarks explaining the procedures that the Committee would follow to hold a virtual meeting. Governor Baker signed an Executive Order in response to the COVID-19 pandemic allowing virtual meetings, which suspended the usual Open Meeting Law requirement that a quorum of committee members be physically present in order to hold an official committee meeting. Amstutz confirmed the committee members in attendance for the meeting.

2. Connect Arlington Final Draft Recommendations and Strategies.

Amstutz noted he should have included approval of minutes from previous meetings but did not and will post them as drafts for now.

Amstutz said the final draft of the plan had been sent out by Nelson/Nygaard. At this point the goal is to focus on small changes and typos that need to be fixed and get into implementation. He went over highlights and major changes to the final document, including: formatting updates, the addition of "Responsive and Transparent Transportation Decision-Making" as a plan goal, a final safety improvement area map with specific locations, new concept diagrams, addition of a pedestrian strategy to develop a sidewalk construction program, tracking metrics and targets, implementation tables, and various text improvements. He went into more detail about each item as part of his presentation.

Amstutz explained that the safety improvement map provides recommendations for areas that need improvement based on crash data analyzed for the Factbook but also includes areas where improvements have been made that should be

monitored. He went over the concept diagrams that include bike lanes on Broadway, addressing challenging intersections such as Broadway and Warren Street, and a bike boulevard on Wachusett Ave.

In regard to the concept showing changes to Wachusett Ave and Oakland Ave, Darcy Devney noted that some of the angles for the curb extensions shown in the concepts look difficult for emergency vehicles to navigate, and they should be consulted before proposing these changes. Amstutz acknowledged that emergency services are important stakeholders in street changes and would be consulted if these are put forth to be fully designed. Rachael Stark said the principal of Dallin should be contacted to talk about walking in this area. Amstutz noted they have been working with the Dallin School recently regarding arrival and dismissal issues.

Amstutz went over the metrics section and explained it will need to have revisions to be clearer and understand what metrics are being used to track progress. Doug Mayo-Wells noted that metrics that use count data should be indexed to town population and how that changes over time for the metric to be useful in tracking progress over 20 years.

Amstutz discussed the implementation strategy and table. Some strategies have been highlighted as higher priorities than others, as well as those that can be “quick wins”. Len Diggins noted a top priority for him is the Local Transportation Improvement Program (LTIP) as that will have a significant impact on how the other strategies get prioritized. He also noted it should be updated on an annual basis instead of quarterly, with regular meetings of the committee, and public engagement included. Committee members noted the plan should be ADA-accessible, including making better contrast on the text in the implementation table. Mike Rademacher said the document has many short-term priorities for Public Works and it may be difficult for them to find funding and staff capacity to do them in the short term. Amstutz noted that some short-term items may require simply figuring out the path for a program or future project as opposed to implementing it (such as new sidewalk construction). Jenny Raitt added that some of these items could come up in the near term as part of the next budget cycle that starts late summer. Devney suggested that painting curbs to show no parking and including crossing flags as more immediate measures could be included. Quick wins should be done to show the plan is getting implemented. Rademacher noted painting curbs could be costly to maintain, and they moved to signage instead. Petru Sofio said two priorities he supports are making walking and biking connections to the Minuteman Bikeway and doing tactical improvements with paint and flex-posts to the oddly-shaped intersections in Arlington. Diggins added his recommended priorities are for pedestrian and bicycle safety, car sharing, and merging priorities with the Net Zero Action Plan. Stark said adding a note about enforcement is important as well. Committee members made additional formatting recommendations.

If the committee endorses this, the next steps will be to finalize the text and format of the document, promote it to the community, have it endorsed by the Select Board. It will also be presented to the Master Plan Implementation Committee later this month. Implementation of certain projects is ongoing or already planned, including improving Chestnut Street and Mass Ave/Appleton, the Minuteman Bikeway Planning Project, and studying the Minuteman Bikeway to Mystic River Path trail alignment.

Rademacher asked if committee members could have more time to review the document. Diggins agreed that holding off on endorsing the plan would be a good idea to let members look at it more closely. He also suggested that the plan should be promoted after it is endorsed by the committee and Select Board. Committee members discussed the process and next steps on endorsing and promoting the plan, and the timing of Board endorsement given that Annual Town Meeting is approaching. Raitt suggested Town staff could meet with Select Board members individually to bring them up to speed on the plan and get their feedback in advance of a full Board meeting. Committee members agreed this would be a good approach to take. Any promotion before the Board meeting should make it clear this is a draft document. Amstutz said they will have meetings with the Board members later this month, have another Advisory Committee meeting to endorse the plan, and come back to the full Board for endorsement by late May or early June.

Amstutz noted they will get all the materials from Nelson/Nygaard to finalize the plan. He will follow up with committee members on scheduling the next meeting.

3. Next steps for plan implementation.

The committee discussed next steps in the last agenda item.

4. Adjourn.